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PLAN I

LIMITED ONE-TIME STRIKE (50 SORTIES) AGAINST MRBM SITES

Action Contemplated

A. Basic Features

The target of the single strike contemplated by this plan would be limited to the known MRBM site, including the MRBM's and launchers, the warheads and the suspect nuclear storage sites. Presumably this strike could be accomplished in a matter of minutes.

B. Advantages of Plan

Because the contemplated action is of a severely limited nature it should appear in the eyes of the world as not incommensurate with the danger presented to the United States by the missile sites. Particularly if the operation were coupled with some diplomatic gesture, the emphasis might well be shifted to the American desire to achieve a political solution rather than to the military action itself.

C. Alternative Possibilities

Two possible approaches to this operation should be considered:

Alternative One

The operation could be carried out without prior notification either to Khrushchev or to Castro but with simultaneous public announcement and the delivery of messages to Khrushchev and Castro. Under this alternative Macmillan, Adenauer, and DeGaulle would be advised by the President 12 hours in advance. President Betancourt and two or three other Latin American heads of state might be notified an hour

ahead

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or two ahead of the operation. However, it is doubtful that any Latin American head of state could be given as much as 12 hours notice without jeopardizing possibility of surprise.

On the same day lauthorization would be sought to convene the OAS Organ of Consultation and the NAC would also be advised, preferable by a high level emissary of the President.

Alternative Two

The same schedule would be followed except that a prior approach would be made to Khrushchev and Castro 24 hours in advance. They would not be notified of the nature of the proposed operation or of its timing but they would be advised that some early action was planned.

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D. Advantages and Disadvantages of Each ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Alternative

Alternative One

Advantages

An operation conducted without advance notice would be most economical since it could exploit the element of surprise. One can argue, in fact, that the major reason for limiting the operation to the specific missile targets is in order to justify action against them without prior consultation. Since the targets were about to become operational it could be argued that the requirements did not permit advance discussions.

An additional argument for this alternative is that the whole operation could presumably be completed within an hour. It would thus be a fait accompli before there would be a chance for any reaction. In a ~~XXXXXX~~ sense it can be argued that the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ preventative action of taking out the missile sites would not be unlike Khrushchev's actions in shooting down the U-2.

Disadvantages:

The disadvantages relate not only to the reactions of Khrushchev and Castro but also to the reactions of our NATO allies - and to a lesser extent to members of the OAS. Khrushchev might well feel that he had been humiliated and, therefore, under compulsion to make some counter-strike. Castro could use the incident as an evidence of the callousness and arrogance of the United States in suddenly attacking a small nation without notice. He might well respond by killing prisoners, by an attack on Guantanamo, or even by an impulsive raid against some United States coastal city or installation.

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Alternative Two

Advantages

The advantages of this alternative are that, by offering a time for Khrushchev and Castro to respond to our démarche, we would possibly provide them and the United States with a way out without bloodshed. Moreover, we would, in the eyes of the world, be using the pattern of Suez.

Disadvantages

The obvious disadvantage of the second alternative is that it compromises the element of security. It may therefore render the operation not only more costly but even impossible of fulfillment, since, with advance notice, the Russians might get the weapons under cover. However, if the advance notice were limited to 24 hours or less, the possibility of effective dispersal would be greatly reduced.

Another possible disadvantage is that advance notice might result in Khrushchev being led to make some hard threats which would commit him to take reckless action after the event.

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E. Accompanying Diplomatic Moves

1. Message to Khrushchev

Under alternative 1, this message would be delivered simultaneously to Dobrynin in Washington and, hopefully, by Ambassador Kohler to Khrushchev in Moscow. If the operation were undertaken at dawn this would mean that the message would be delivered to Khrushchev in the latter part of the afternoon.

Whether delivered in advance or simultaneously, the tone of the message would be more sorrow than anger:

It would:

- (a) Underline the President's shock at discovering unchallengeable evidence of an NREM installation in Cuba;
- (b) point out that the President had been assured by Khrushchev that the Soviet Union would put no offensive weapons in Cuba;
- (c) recall that the President had stated publicly that, in the event the Cubans were given any offensive capability, he would take appropriate action;
- (d) recite that the President was taking action to eliminate the specific NREM's so far identified and that similar action would be taken against any additional nuclear installations as soon as they were discovered; and
- (e) put Khrushchev on notice that, meanwhile, the United States would, as a matter of self defense, fly low-level reconnaissance missions over Cuba.

2. Message

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2. Message to Castro

The message to Castro, which would be made public at the time of the attack, would:

- (a) point out the prior warning given by the President;
- (b) the determination of the United States to act for the defense of its own interests and those of the other American states; and
- (c) the decision of the United States to take action against this specific target. The message would point out that the action was limited to the target but that it would be repeated against any other offensive installation that might be later identified, and that in the meantime the United States would fly close surveillance missions.

3. Public Statement Justifying Attack

The President would at the time of the attack also issue a statement pointing out:

- (a) that limited military action was being taken in defense of the security of the United States and the other American states;
- (b) recalling the President's prior warning on this subject and emphasizing that the operation was being so designed as to result in the minimum jeopardy of human life;

(c) making

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- (c) making clear that the mission had to be undertaken on an emergency basis so as to assure that the installations would not become operational;
- (d) referring to Chairman Khrushchev's assurances that no offensive weapons would be placed in Cuba;
- (e) recalling the President's prior warning that, in the event Cuba were armed with offensive weapons, the United States would take necessary action;
- (f) pointing out that this action was taken reluctantly and that no prior consultation was possible because of the imminent danger

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of the weapons becoming operational;

- (g) emphasizing that the operation was limited to the narrow objectives of destroying the particular weapons and that it was designed to minimize casualties;
- (h) making clear, however, that the United States would feel compelled in the future to take similar action against any further offensive weapons that might appear; and concluding
- (i) that for purposes of its own defense and in fidelity to its treaty obligations to the other American states, it would find it necessary to fly close surveillance missions.

4. Call for Summit Conference

The message might include a call for a summit conference. It could point out that the introduction of offensive weapons in Cuba in violation of the assurances of Chairman Khrushchev had created greatly increased tensions to add to the other problems between the Western powers and the Communist Bloc. Those circumstances made it imperative that an immediate conference be held at the summit -- presumably on a bilateral basis in order to permit the Chairman and the President to discuss the whole range of problems between the Communist Bloc and the Western powers. Otherwise the situation might rapidly deteriorate.

D. Possible Cuban Response

The major defect of this plan, from a military point of view, is that, in providing for the elimination merely of the known NREH installation, it leaves intact other Cuban offensive capabilities. Thus there is a danger that Castro

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might respond to our attack by a counter-strike against a Florida city, such as Miami, or an American military installation in the Southeast, such as Cape Canaveral.

In answer to this, it can be argued that Castro would be unlikely to risk the almost certain destruction that would follow an offensive action against the United States -- particularly if it were made clear at the time of our air strike that it was limited to the known MRBM installation.

Another objection to the plan is that it would leave intact other possible Cuban nuclear capabilities, such as airborne nuclear weapons or MRBM sites not disclosed by aerial reconnaissance.

E. Soviet Response

It is possible that, in view of the speed with which the attack could be concluded, it might pass as a relatively minor incident. In that event, Khrushchev could treat it as of no more importance than his own shooting down of our U-2 in 1960. On the other hand, one cannot rule out the possibility that he would feel it necessary to make a military response against Berlin or possibly Turkey.

F. Attitude of NATO and the OAS

While there might be some disposition on the part of certain of the NATO countries to suggest an impolite analogy to Suez, the fact that the United States was compelled to act quickly in order to prevent the missile from becoming operational would tend to blunt the indignation that might result from a failure to make undertake prior consultations. Indignation would be further blunted if the President were to make a simultaneous call for a summit conference, which would meet the expressed or unexpressed wishes of a number of the NATO countries.

The effect

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The effect on the members of the OAS would undoubtedly be mixed. There would be an unconscious resentment against United States intervention in Cuban affairs. Certain of the Caribbean countries might feel regret that the action was not more definitive. Other Latin American countries would be relieved that the air strike was so limited.

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